

RECEIVED
CENTRAL FAX CENTER

DEC 27 2006

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended) A support structure or sleeve, for the use in a machine tool, of the type comprising a tubular body which is able to be associated with a carriage and on which a spindle is mounted, comprising:

a first casing (10), which is made of rigid material[[.]];

a second tubular casing having the same axis and housed inside the first casing; and

an interspace (30) defined by said first and second casings, the interspace being filed at least partially by a vibrocompacted a layer in contact with at least a part of the internal surface of said first casing (10), which consists of an agglomerate (40) formed by means of hardening of a mixture consisting of a granulate of stone and/or ceramic and/or expanded clay material, or combination thereof, and a resin of the hardening type so that the resultant structure consists of a single piece, the said layer of agglomerate forming the a cavity housing said spindle.

2. (Cancelled)

3. (Currently Amended) Support structure according to ~~Claim 2~~claim 1, further comprising, inside said interspace (30), means for connecting together the internal surface of the first casing (10) and the external surface of the second casing (20).

4. (Original) Support structure according to Claim 3, wherein said connection means consist of ring elements (23) which are rigidly fixed to the said surface of the first casing (10) and the second casing (20), said ring elements (23) having a height (H) which is equal to the thickness of said interspace (30).

5. (Original) Support structure according to Claim 4, wherein each of said ring elements (23) surrounds a coaxial hole (22) having a diameter (D_1) not greater than its own diameter (D_2), said holes (22) being provided at least in the surface of the second casing (20).

6. (Withdrawn) Support structure according to ~~Claim 2~~claim 1, wherein the internal surface of the said first casing (10) and/or the external surface of the said second casing (20) are roughened, for example, sandblasted, in order to favour fixing of the layer of agglomerate.

7. (Withdrawn) Support structure according to ~~Claim 2~~claim 1, wherein the internal surface of the said first casing (10) and/or the external surface of the said second casing (20) are provided with means, such as for example ribs parallel and/or perpendicular to the axis of the said structure, in order to favour gripping of the agglomerate.

BEST AVAILABLE COPY

8. (Original) Support structure according to Claim 1, wherein said first casing (10) is made of sheet steel.

9. (Currently Amended) Support structure according to claim 1~~Claim 2~~, wherein said second casing (20) is made of sheet steel.

10. (Original) Support structure according to Claim 9, wherein the sheet steel from which the said second casing (20) is made is thinner than the sheet steel from which the said first casing (10) is made.

11. (Currently Amended) Support structure according to ~~Claim 2~~claim 1, wherein said second casing (20) is made of moulded plastic material.

12. (Original) Support structure according to Claim 1, further comprising pipes (32, 34) for circulation of a cooling fluid embedded in the said layer of agglomerate (40).

13-18 (Cancelled)